



Loudoun County, Virginia

Planning Commission

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January 26, 2011

Honorable Scott K. York, Chairman
Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
1 Harrison St. S.W.
Leesburg, Virginia 20177

Re: CPAM 2009-0001, Keynote Employment Policies Comprehensive Plan Amendment

Dear Chairman York,

On February 3, 2009, the Board of Supervisors initiated CPAM 2009-0001, Keynote Employment Policies Comprehensive Plan Amendment, to consider retaining or changing the Revised General Plan Keynote Employment land use policies for a specified study area within the Route 28 Corridor. The Board directed the Planning Commission to lead this effort. On January 19, 2011 the Planning Commission completed its work on the draft amendment, the Route 28 Corridor Plan (See attached.). Below are brief summaries of the process, key findings, and Plan followed by specific implementation-related recommendations for the Board to consider.

PROCESS AND KEY FINDINGS

To develop the draft amendment, the Planning Commission participated with County staff to solicit input from stakeholders within the Route 28 Corridor. County staff used multiple outreach tools including public input sessions, interviews, targeted questionnaires, and research to develop several reports, including the Route 28 Business Outreach Results Report; Belfort Park Task Force Final Report; the Route 28 Tax District Existing Conditions Report; and the Route 28 Corridor Analysis of Development Potential for Class A Office Space. Key findings include:

- ✓ Stakeholders believe the Route 28 Corridor should be an employment-based corridor that offers broad employment opportunities;
- ✓ Stakeholders believe that more opportunities should be provided for a variety of office settings, with a focus on a mix of uses where employment supportive retail and services provide amenities desired in the corridor;
- ✓ Stakeholders suggest locating mixed-use office centers, that include a limited amount of multi-family residential, at strategic locations in the Route 28 Corridor to effectively catalyze the office development potential of sites and their vicinities;
- ✓ Stakeholders find that mixed uses are more efficient and attractive to the marketplace than office campuses (as promoted by current policy);
- ✓ Stakeholders believe development in the corridor should take advantage of its proximity to Washington Dulles International Airport by attracting new aviation and airport-ancillary businesses in appropriate areas; and,
- ✓ The Route 28 Corridor should encourage sustainable development practices.

PLAN SUMMARY

The proposed policies address the findings above and seek to maximize the commercial development potential within the Route 28 Corridor by offering several land development patterns, each defined by different land use mixes and intensities. The draft amendment eliminates the Destination Retail Overlays within the corridor that support stand-alone, large-scale, multi-tenant shopping centers and big box stores. The Planning Commission did not change or modify existing and planned residential and high-density residential neighborhoods within the corridor and the designated Urban Center remains in the northern portion of the corridor. The Planning Commission proposes Mixed-Use Office Centers as a new development option in three locations along the Route 28 corridor. The northern location is the site of the 2010 Kincora mixed-use zoning; the southern location includes the Dulles World Center proposal. To avoid “creep” into adjacent areas within the core and to reserve significant areas of the core for Office Clusters, the draft plan includes policies that do not support any Mixed-Use Office Center proposals that extend beyond the northern and southern boundaries of the Mixed-Use Office Center development envelopes. The maximum 270 acres of Mixed-Use Office Centers that may be considered in the corridor represents approximately 15% of the Route 28 Core land area and 3% of the total Route 28 Corridor; maintaining the corridor as a significant employment corridor for the County.

Mixed-Use Office Centers are live-work centers that will have higher intensities and a greater variety of uses than other areas of the corridor including multi-family residential to support a diversity of residents and workers, transit, and retail, entertainment, and recreational activities. The mix of uses will encourage creation of vibrant, activity-rich centers that will attract office tenants and a broad spectrum of residents and employees to the corridor and create unique “places” that are amenities for the entire corridor and its surrounding areas.

The Planning Commission stresses the importance of the Transportation, Housing, Design, and Sustainable Development policies as keys to the success of this corridor. Among these policies are those that promote an interconnected fine grid of streets, paths, and green spaces. This framework will improve not only traffic flow (by allowing local traffic to avoid Atlantic, and Pacific Boulevards) but also enhance the sense of a unified place for the entire corridor. The Design Guideline Policies cover sites, streets, blocks, streetscape, buildings, parking, parks and open space, public and civic spaces, landscape, and signage. The Sustainable Development Policies cover energy, storm water, green building practices, landscape, and green infrastructure.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

The Commission feels strongly that upon adoption of the Route 28 Corridor Plan, the Board should immediately initiate several implementation efforts in order to ensure that the vision for the Route 28 Corridor is achieved.

Zoning

Of paramount importance is to establish regulatory and performance standards that match the preferred development patterns outlined in policy. Zoning is the most effective tool to implement the policies contained within the draft amendment. Zoning regulations can also exclude incompatible uses, expedite desired uses and patterns, and promote properties to develop to their highest potential.

The Commission briefly discussed five possible zoning implementation strategies:

- Creating a new Planned Development District(s);
- Amending existing Planned Development Zoning District(s);
- Developing Use Patterns as an alternative development option within specific zoning districts;
- Developing a Planned Development Overlay Zone(s); and/or,
- Creating a Form-Based Code for the corridor.

The draft Route 28 Corridor Plan suggests amending existing zoning districts by including Use Patterns for Office Cluster, Office, and Flex as development options. Use patterns provide more predictability and offer the developer more varied employment settings through prescriptive standards. This approach would speed the development process by allowing for development without legislative review. The Plan also suggests creating a new Planned Development Zoning District(s) for Mixed-Use Office Center. This zoning strategy will need to be further evaluated as part of a Board-initiated implementation effort.

Public/Civic Facilities Plan

The Commission wrestled with how to best incorporate public and civic uses into the Route 28 Corridor Plan which promotes a more urban style development pattern. The current case-by-case approach of calculating the land use mix for public and civic uses does not really work in these cases. As such, the draft Plan incorporates new ways to achieve them including; using Floor-to-Area ratios versus acreage to determine the amount of these uses needed and providing an option for cash-in-lieu and/or providing a portion of these uses off-site within the corridor. With this more urban development pattern, a new approach to assessing and quantifying the actual public facilities needs will also be important. In this regard, the Commission recommends that the Board develop a Public and Civic Facilities Plan unique to the Route 28 Corridor. The Commission also suggests that a Public and Civic Facilities Plan determine whether the minimum and maximum percentages by land use pattern for such uses, as identified in the Route 28 Corridor Plan policies, are appropriate.

Transportation

The draft Route 28 Corridor Plan promotes a development pattern that focuses the most intensive development along Route 28. The proposed changes in land use would result in a roughly 5-10% increase in trips on the road network. From a broad perspective, these proposed increases in vehicle trips can be accommodated by the current planned network, given available capacity. The location and distribution of additional trips, and the impact to each road segment, is something that would be determined with a full modeling analysis. It should be noted that certain network enhancements were recommended for this corridor as part of the Inter-jurisdictional Group¹ and were developed to specifically target the known deficiencies in the 2030 network. These included (among others):

- The extension of Davis Drive/Atlantic Boulevard south from Route 606, across the Dulles Toll Road and into Fairfax County ;
- The extension of Sterling Boulevard west from Pacific Boulevard (at Route 28) to Moran Road; and,
- The extension of Pacific Boulevard south from Route 606 to the west side of the interchange at Route 28 and Innovation Avenue.

The Commission recommends the Board incorporate the work and recommendations of the Inter-jurisdictional Group into the draft Plan and the Countywide Transportation Plan. The Commission believes that these transportation projects are critical elements of the corridor plan

The Commission also recommends implementing a more fine-grained, multi-modal transportation network specific to the Route 28 Corridor to ensure connectivity throughout the corridor.

Residential Buy-out Formula

The draft Route 28 Corridor Plan introduces an additional, limited amount of residential uses into the corridor. While residential uses are not prohibited under the requirements of the Route 28 Tax District, the County anticipates such developments will “buy-out” of the District. Therefore some on the Commission feel the formula used to determine the amount of “buy-out” is dated and does not adequately compensate the District for the loss of future tax revenues. The Commission recommends the Board consider options for reevaluating the “buy-out” formula.

¹ Includes elected officials and staff from Fairfax County, Town of Herndon, and Loudoun County.

Route 28 Implementation Steering Committee

The draft Route 28 Corridor Plan calls for the County to form a Route 28 Implementation Committee comprised of public and private experts to assist the County with the marketing, development and monitoring of the Corridor's strategic implementation plan, including the metrics used to assess the impact of the Route 28 Corridor Plan on expected outcomes. The Committee would establish and coordinate three work groups related to plan implementation: Design; Zoning; and, Transportation. The Commission recommends the Board establish this Committee immediately following adoption of the Plan.

Additional Public Outreach

Upon completion of the draft Route 28 Corridor Plan, the Commission discussed additional outreach to the community to present their draft plan. However, given the Board's adopted Workplan and the timelines specified within, the Commission determined that meeting directly with the community would not be possible at this time. To ensure as much notice as possible prior to the Board's February 7, 2011 Public Hearing, the Commission directed staff to include information on the plan amendment on the first page of the County's web site as well as sending out citizen alerts via the Office of Public Information. The Commission recommends the Board consider additional outreach to the public as part of their review of the plan amendment.

We look forward to the Board's review and consideration of the Commission's recommendations. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can be of further assistance.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J. Kevin Ruedisueli". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Kevin Ruedisueli, Chairman
Loudoun County Planning Commission

cc: Loudoun County Board of Supervisors
Loudoun County Planning Commission
Tim Hemstreet, County Administrator
Linda Neri, Deputy County Administrator.
Julie Pastor, AICP, Director of Planning
Miguel Salinas, Project Manager, CPAM 2009-0001